

Moments

by Tarn

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Summary: In life, simple moments can be some of the most powerful forces of change, despite sometimes lasting less than a second. A series of three short stories focusing on Astrid's POV before and during the battle against the Red Death.

## 1. Moments: Glory of Night

**\*\*Moments: Glory of Night\*\***

**\*\*Tarn 2013\*\***

**\*\*In life, simple moments can be some of the most powerful forces of change, despite sometimes lasting less than a second:\*\***

Astrid Hofferson had been trained and groomed into the Viking culture, which prided itself on physical and mental strength. The history of her people had hardened that with frequent raids by various breeds of dragons, she was bred to become a warrior that would defend Berk against the flying monstrosities.

She couldn't have imagined a scenario where that would be called into question. So while clutching to the young viking for dear life as the most dreaded beast in viking history flung them around the skies like a rag doll, a simple "Okay, i'm sorry! I'm sorry, just get me off this thing!" had been an apology that started her new outlook on life.

The Night Fury had settled down and took them calmly back to the sky, and once her heartrate started to settle down Astrid dared to open her eyes. Years later she would realize that doing so was the best and most important decision she ever made.

The sunset had cast a purple hue to the clouds, and as the dragon took them close enough, she felt compelled to reach out to the fluffy masses. Unbelievable was a word that came to mind as Toothless took

them higher and as the sun finished its descent, a majestic display of multi colored lights danced around them.

Astrid's heart leapt as the clouds below them parted to reveal the glory of Berk, campfires and lantern lights dotting the landscape like fireflies in the night sky. This was a moment she would never forget, and it occurred to her that she might be only the second person in Berk's history to see the village like this.

As the Night Fury soared through the rocky pillars that surrounded the village, something new and uncertain rushed through her and all Astrid knew was that she wanted to hold onto the moment forever. Putting aside all of her hard viking demeanor the young woman leaned in to rest her head on Hiccup's shoulder and wrapped her arms around him.

Things got more than a little hectic as minutes later, a fleet of food carrying dragons swarmed the three, forcing them to follow alongside them back to a volcanic island. Toothless followed them inside, where it became apparent that the dragon's had been feeding a far larger beast in order to avoid its wrath. Barely making it out with their lives, Astrid insisted on reporting what they found but Hiccup would not relent, "Not yet, they'll kill Toothless..."

She continued her explanation of how what they found was the goal of every Berkian viking for the past 300 years. "You want to keep this a secret, to protect your pet dragon? Are you serious?!"

Hiccup turned to look at her with what had to be the most serious look on his face that she had ever seen as he responded without hesitation, "Yes."

This was not the answer Astrid expected and in yet another moment, what she thought she knew dissolved into the sky as Hiccup proved that he was far from the weak and useless viking that everyone in Berk thought him to be. Hiccup's strengths had shown themselves in his mind and unbreakable spirit, refusing to yield even when the very next day his own people turned against him.

## 2. Moments: Inner Strength

**\*\*Moments: Inner Strength\*\***

**\*\*Tarn 2013\*\***

In life, simple moments can be some of the most powerful forces of change, despite sometimes lasting less than a second:

The very public discovery and capture of the young viking's Night Fury had been a terrifying experience as the Monstorous Nightmare that Hiccup had tried to soothe instead charged the boy after Stoick spooked it at the worst possible moment. Toothless came storming in to the rescue, but was captured almost immediately. It took every bit of Astrid's strength to hold the dragon's rider back as they bound the beast, knowing there was nothing they could do about it right then.

Later that day as Stoick sailed the entire Berkian Fleet to certain doom using the Night Fury to guide them to the Dragon's nest within

Helheim's Gate, Astrid climbed the peak that looked out over the docks knowing that she would find Hiccup there. He would certainly be exiled for his actions if they survived, and she desperately wanted to know exactly what brought them to this point.

"It's a mess..." Astrid stated the obvious as they watched the ships dot the horizon, "You must feel horrible. You've lost everything. Your father, your tribe, your best friend."

"Thank you for summing that up..." Hiccup replied, sounding completely dejected.

An uncomfortable silence passed before he mused, "Why couldn't I have killed that dragon when I found him in the woods. It would have been better for everyone."

Astrid pondered this for a moment, deciding this was her chance to understand... "Yep, the rest of us would have done it. Why didn't you?"

When it seemed like Hiccup wouldn't answer she repeated her question, intent on drawing out the intensity and strength she saw in the cove. "Why didn't you?"

"I don't know. I couldn't." Hiccup weakly responded, and this irked Astrid to no end. "That's not an answer."

Her invasive questioning had finally gotten to the dejected boy, sparking a touch of anger. "Why is this so important to you all of a sudden?" he snapped uncharacteristically.

"Because I want to remember what you say right now." Astrid stated with intensity, this was a moment that could change the course of viking culture.

"Oh for the love of - I was a coward! I was weak. I wouldn't kill a dragon." Hiccup relented, praying to Odin that she would be satisfied and leave him to lament by himself.

"You said 'wouldn't' that time."

"Whatever! I wouldn't! Three hundred years and I'm the first Viking who wouldn't kill a dragon!"

There it was, the intensity she wanted to excavate from the teen's shattered self esteem. Astrid softened at this small concession and stated a simple fact. "First to ride one, though."

Astrid stared at the back of the boy's head, wondering if he had anything more to say. "So..."

Hiccup slowly turned to face her as he admitted, "...I wouldn't kill him because he

looked as frightened as I was. I looked at him and I saw myself."

This was the admission Astrid was looking for, melting her annoyance with his self loathing and turning it into a question. "I bet he's really frightened now. What are you going to do about it?"

"Eh, probably something stupid."

"Good. But you've already done that." Astrid perked up at the fact that Hiccup intended on doing something about it. Seconds later, something sparked in the young man's eyes that grabbed onto Astrid like dragon claws. As the teen started to back away from her towards the dock platforms that would take him back to the village, he exclaimed "Then something crazy!"

As the young woman watched Hiccup run towards Berk, she knew that something important was happening in that exact moment. The boy had become a man, and it sparked something in her heart, something exciting. "That's more like it!"

### 3. Moments: My Heart to the Skies

**\*\*Moments: My Heart to the Skies\*\***

**\*\*Tarn 2013\*\***

In life, simple moments can be some of the most powerful forces of change, despite sometimes lasting less than a second:

Astrid would be hard pressed to admit this to anyone given the Berkian attitude towards dragons, but sitting atop a Deadly Nadder in the heat of battle, calling out orders to her comrades... it just felt right. Hiccup had made quick work of getting the dragons from the arena to calm themselves and with a little work, the teens had each bonded with a dragon of their own. Watching the young man enact his plan was more than a little exhilarating, given that only hours ago the Nightmare had nearly taken Hiccup's face off in the ring.

But now the situation was dire, Berk's catapults had cracked open the nest, awaking the sleeping beast that slumbered within. Every dragon besides the behemoth had fled, fearing for their own lives.

Arriving on the scene, Hiccup had given orders to the other teens and instructed Astrid to drop him on one of the flaming ships where Toothless remained locked up, "Go help the others!"

As she pulled away from the shore and back towards the creature and her fellow classmates, she tried to ignore the strange feeling she felt about leaving Hiccup on a flaming wreck of a ship.

Returning to the heart of the battle, she noticed the beast cry out in pain and saw that Snotlout had somehow lost his mount and was atop the dragon's head attacking it's eyes. "Yeah! You're the viking!" she yelled to him, deciding to toss his ego a little boost given the ridiculously bold nature of what he was doing.

"He's up!" Astrid cried out excitedly as a black streak took to the skies from the firey shoreline. He made it! Her relief was understandable given the situation, but the level to which it lifted her up was confusing in a way that she simply had no time to ponder.

Pulling the harness ropes to bank her Nadder to the right of the

beast's giant maw, she shouted out to the twins aboard their Zippleback, "Get Snotlout out of there!"

Coming around to meet back up with them after they somehow managed to pull close enough to the dragon's spiked back for Snotlout to launch himself onto the Zippleback she could hear Tuffnut cry out "I can't believe that worked!"

That was when things went from bad to worse as the Nadder pulled out in front of the beast's head. A deafening whistling begun to form as the wind whipping past Astrid reversed direction, indicating the colossal dragon was inhaling in preparation to either consume her and the Nadder or to incinerate them in a flaming barrage. Holding onto the rope harness for dear life, she felt her legs dangle as a sense of weightlessness came over her as the backward motion increased. 'Thor help me, I'm dead. I'm sorry Hiccup.' Astrid thought as she dangled helplessly behind the blue dragon. Above the terrifying whistling from the inhaling creature a new sound tore through the air, a sound that Astrid knew well and despite it all a small smile lit up her face.

Seconds later a searing heat from a deafening explosion threw every one of the Nadder pilot's senses into overload as the heat was replaced with the stomach lurching sensation of falling. The ground and sky began to spin out of control as she tumbled towards the rocky shores, and all she could do was let out a blood curdling scream.

'Please Hiccup!' was the only thing that ran through her mind as the ground began zooming ever closer. A sudden and extreme sense of vertigo hit as she felt something yank powerfully and painfully on her leg. Taking in her surroundings she saw the pitch black scales of the underside of the Night Fury, a panicked voice calling out from above, "Did you get her?!"

Seeing the cat like face of Toothless looking underneath at her with a gummy smile could only bring her to grin. Hiccup and Toothless had pulled off the impossible yet again and plucked her from certain doom for the second time in only seconds.

As they raced to the shore, the Night Fury flipped her with its powerful legs and caught her by the shoulders to release her on the shores at a run.

Astrid slowed her run to a halt, ragged breaths coming in quick succession fueled by adrenaline. Unable to take her eyes off of the retreating form as wings the color of midnight fearlessly returned to the skies, the young viking woman came to the sudden realization that for better or worse, this was the most important moment in the history of Berk.

Every fiber of her being was ablaze and her heart felt it would burst with pride and something she couldn't quite understand as the unlikely pair soared to the heavens to combat the beast. Feeling compelled to send them on their way with some sort of encouragement she uttered a simple phrase, but with the single breathless word she sent her love and indeed her heart to the skies, "Go!"

**\*\*Thanks to everyone for reading... this third part was really what I was aiming for with this series, the emotion and intensity in the end**

of this scene really was something.\*\*

End  
file.